Helping Communities Bloom

A Family Literacy Resource Guide for British Columbia

Promoting and supporting literacy and learning since 1990

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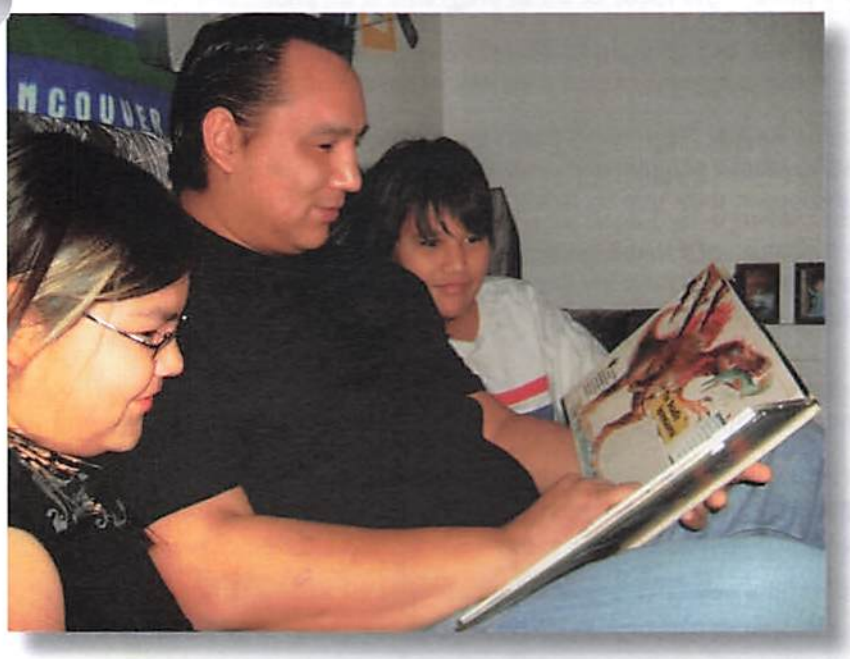
Purpose

Family literacy programs in British Columbia are as varied as the communities they are located in, the individuals and groups who develop and implement them, and the family members who participate in them. This great diversity is evidenced by the fact that a roomful of people involved in family literacy can each provide a different answer to the questions: "What is family literacy?" and "What is a family literacy activity or program?"

This Family Literacy Resource Guide is intended to provide support and information to the many individuals and groups involved in family literacy throughout the province. Some examples of these individuals and groups are: family literacy practitioners, program administrators, school districts, teachers' organizations, early childhood educators, libraries, colleges, family resource programs, government ministries, funders and evaluators. This Resource Guide reflects the philosophies, principles and realities of the diversity of family literacy programs in the province and provides useful guidelines for development, delivery and evaluation of programs.

The Family Literacy Resource Guide was, in part, adapted from the BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy.



What are some ways in which this Family Literacy Resource Guide can be used?

- Family literacy program coordinators and practitioners can use the Resource Guide to identify strengths and as an evaluation tool for enhancing effective literacy practices in their programs.
- Organizations can use the Resource Guide to develop family literacy proposals and programs, and as a vehicle for raising awareness and support.
- Partners can use the Resource Guide for assistance in determining their "best fit" with family literacy programs.
- Funders can use the Resource Guide to make informed decisions on allocating appropriate funding for family literacy programs.

Introduction to Family Literacy

Learning is a life-long process. It begins at conception and continues throughout the life span. The family, however defined, is at the centre of this learning and is the primary vehicle for transporting the child through the early years of life and into the future. Just as a child does not live in isolation of the family unit, families do not exist separate from community. It is within community that children and families establish roots and discover who they are and what their potential is.

Defining Family Literacy

Family literacy acknowledges the richness and complexity of families and the multiple, often unrecognized literacy tasks that are part of every day life. Given the diversity of families, programs and materials, the term "family literacy" can mean different things to different people.

The National Adult Literacy Database has divided the definition of family literacy into six activity categories. Although not truly definitions in the dictionary sense, they help to describe the variety of programming that organizations call family literacy:

Intergenerational – parents and children are offered literacy instruction, both participating equally in the program.

Focus on Parent or Primary Caregiver – parents/caregivers are the main focus of the program. They usually receive training on ways to help develop their children's literacy skills at home.

Parent Involvement – the focus of these programs is to increase parents/caregivers involvement in their children's literacy development through sessions, which have both the parent/caregiver and child doing literacy related activities.

Family Literacy Activity for the General Public – the focus of these programs is on public awareness and/or informal participation for literacy enjoyment.

Projects for Family Literacy Resources – these programs create a variety of resources made available to parents/caregivers to help support family literacy.

Family Literacy Professional Development – these programs involve training practitioners already working in literacy or with families to help increase the support they give to family literacy development.

Definitions can also be gleaned from a variety of books, reference materials, manuals, surveys and interviews. The one thing that emerges very clearly is that the parent **MUST** be involved to call it family literacy. If the program only focuses on children, then it should be defined as children's literacy.

Family literacy ...

- is the intergenerational sharing of experiences and meanings, which enhance the development of language and numeracy skills
- regards the family as a "learning unit" and provides integrated support and learning opportunities for all family members
- is an innovative educational approach based upon a powerful premise: *parents are their children's first and most important teachers*
- is a shared responsibility that builds on existing community resources and combines the strengths of many partners
- is culturally responsive and as diverse as the communities in which it develops
- addresses the intergenerational correlation between education-level, income-level and health status

Introduction to Family Literacy

Goals of Family Literacy

- promote reading and learning as valued family activities that encourage positive interactions and shared experiences
- enhance the ability of parents to support their children's literacy development, from birth throughout the school years
- provide an opportunity for parents to pursue their own educational goals
- provide children with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that support "school readiness"
- promote and support lifelong learning

The Need for Family Literacy Programs

- Research indicates that if we want our intervention and prevention efforts to be effective, we must work with the family as a unit. Interventions aimed only at specific age groups (children, youth or adults) show little or no gains in cognitive development that are sustained over time.

> The family is the strongest element in shaping lives. It's the most powerful support network there is. It's where the cycle of learning begins, where the attitudes of parents about learning become the educational values of their children. Through education of more than one generation, family literacy programs build on families' strengths and provide the tools and support they need to become stronger and more self-sufficient.
>
> *National Centre for Family Literacy, Kentucky*

- Interventions with parents that aim to support children's learning should also consider the broader social context of parenting by acknowledging and responding to the barriers created by poverty and low parental education (Rodriguez and Tami-LeMonda, 2008).
- Adult literacy programs currently reach fewer than 10% of adults who need these programs and family literacy programs are a way of reaching these adults (Hayden et. Al, 2006).
- When parents have a higher level of education they transfer literacy 'intergenerationally' through oral language skills and modeling literacy skills to their children (Sticht, 2007).
- Children raised in literate households are likely to enter grade one with several thousand hours of one to one pre-reading experience behind them. (Clark, 2007)
- Parents who read to their children before they start school help develop the child's language skills and also their interest in reading and learning in general (Clark, 2007).
- Without crucial parental support, the cycle of under-education may continue in families from generation to generation. With support from family literacy programs, children who might otherwise have been educationally and developmentally behind their peers entered school on par with their peers (U.S. National Center for Family Literacy, Family Literacy and Welfare Reform).
- Connections between parents' levels of educational attainment and children's academic scores have been established in a number of studies. The connections have also been made between socio-economic status, education and literacy levels of parents and of the children of those parents (Clark, 2007).

Introduction to Family Literacy

Statements of Values in Family Literacy

- Literacy is a universal human right.
- Supporting literacy development supports families, helps build strong communities and celebrates life.
- Society benefits when all families are valued.
- Families are the primary source of literacy development; what they do at home is important.
- Educators need to recognize the expertise of families and view all family members as knowledgeable, capable learners.
- At the core of any locally developed family literacy program are the reciprocal practices that are established between family members and educators.
- We must honour, validate and use the languages of the parents and children who participate in family literacy programs.
- Family literacy programs build on the strengths of the families that attend them, respecting their various cultures and backgrounds.
- Family literacy programs are a partnership between educators, social agencies and families, and should be locally relevant – not based on a generic model.
- Family members should have the opportunity to work with educators to develop informative assessments of the family literacy program in which they participate.

Role of the Parent / Primary Caregiver

Like the term 'literacy', family literacy has many different interpretations and meanings. However most definitions agree that family literacy is the way in which parents, children, family members and caregivers use literacy at home and in their communities (Gadsen, 2002). The term 'family literacy' is often attributed to Denny Taylor whose 1983 book, *Family Literacy: Young children learning to read and write*, explored connections between the classroom, the home and literacy, and argued that parents or primary caregivers are their children's first teachers.

The results of a five year longitudinal, control group study in Alberta led the researchers to conclude that raising the educational levels of parents with less than a high school education is the most effective way of increasing both parent's and children's literacy skills (Hayden, Norris and Phillips, 2006). Research into this question was carried out by Christina Clark for the National Literacy Trust UK who found overwhelming evidence that parent's involvement in their children's education has a great benefit (Clark, 2007). The research stresses the importance of parents reading to their children before they start school in order to develop the child's language skills and also their interest in reading and learning in general. Clark found that the parental involvement in their child's literacy was a more powerful force than other family background variables such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Clark, 2007).

Children do better when parents are involved in their education. Without family engagement, interventions are less likely to be effective or lasting. But there is little point in recommending that parents read with their children and support their learning when many do not have the literacy skills to equip them for this role.

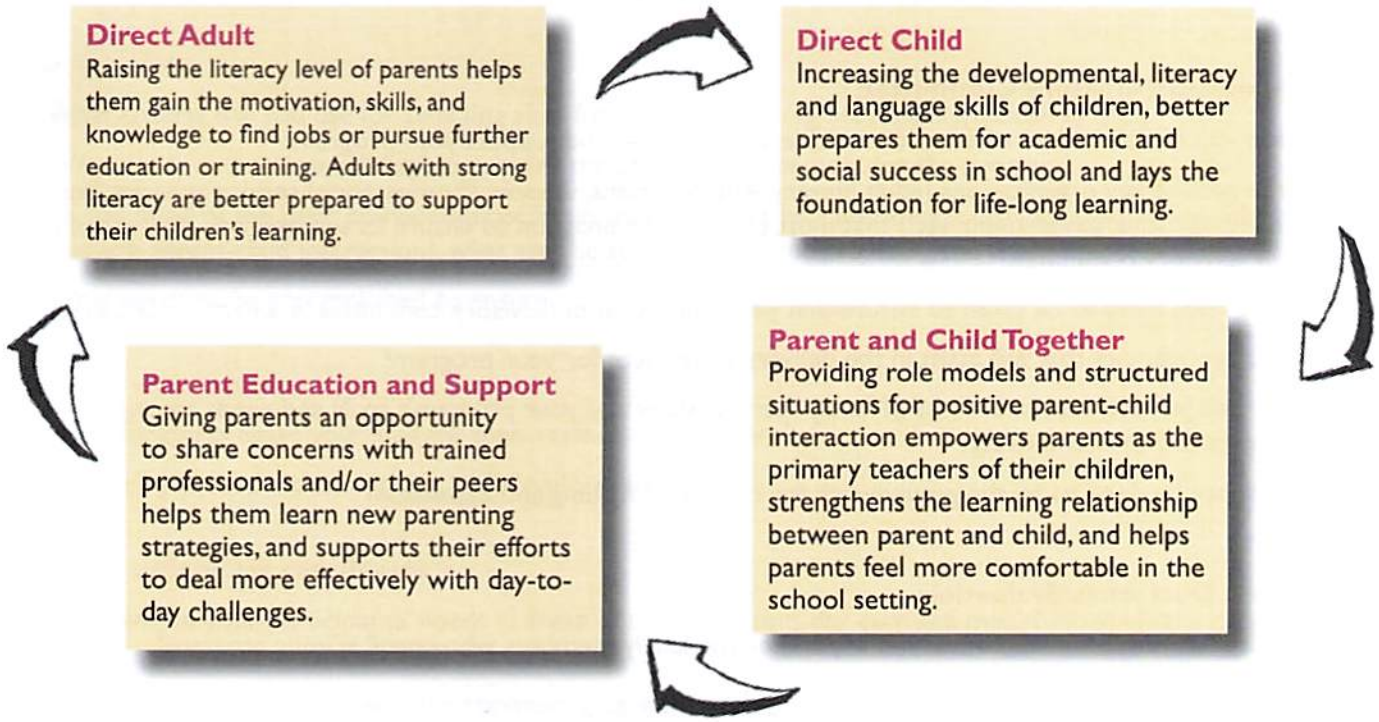
Unless we help parents as well as children develop their skills, the perpetual cycle of low literacy – and the related intergenerational correlations between education level, income, health and other critical outcomes – will persist.

Family literacy programs present a solution that builds the skills of parents and children together and offers a way to reach adults who may not be engaged by other learning opportunities.

Four-Component Comprehensive Approach

Hayden et al (2006) found that adult literacy programs currently reach fewer than 10% of the adults who need these programs. Family literacy programs are a way to reach the adult learners who would benefit from improving their literacy skills. They are known to be most effective when the Kenan Trust Model or **four component model** are integrated in a comprehensive service approach to intergenerational education. The model, developed in 1985 in the United States, offers the following four components: adult literacy training for parents, early childhood education for the child, literacy activities for parent and child together, and skills training for parents on how to create a supportive environment for learning in the home (Perkins & Mendel, 1989).

These components operate most effectively when fully integrated. They can be housed in one location/program or offered in various locations/programs in a community. The critical elements for success in using this approach are teamwork and open communication among the stakeholder groups. This will allow for the separate components to form a comprehensive, family-focused service approach to intergenerational education.


Direct Adult
Raising the literacy level of parents helps them gain the motivation, skills, and knowledge to find jobs or pursue further education or training. Adults with strong literacy are better prepared to support their children's learning.
Direct Child
Increasing the developmental, literacy and language skills of children, better prepares them for academic and social success in school and lays the foundation for life-long learning.
Parent and Child Together
Providing role models and structured situations for positive parent-child interaction empowers parents as the primary teachers of their children, strengthens the learning relationship between parent and child, and helps parents feel more comfortable in the school setting.
Parent Education and Support
Giving parents an opportunity to share concerns with trained professionals and/or their peers helps them learn new parenting strategies, and supports their efforts to deal more effectively with day-to-day challenges.

How to Start a Family Literacy Program

The following topics and questions can be used as a guide to help you get started.

Community Needs

- What are the educational and non-educational needs of families in your community?
- Have you completed a community or neighborhood assessment?
- What programs are currently addressing these needs?
- Are there gaps in service delivery or any duplication of services to families?
- How would a family literacy program fit into your community network of family services?
- What family literacy model best suits the needs of the community based on the assessment?
- What resources will be necessary to support this program?

Collaboration/Advisory Committee

- Have you established an advisory committee to help guide and support your program?
- Who are the key organizations (adult literacy/ABE programs, schools, libraries, social service agencies, business, funding agencies, government, etc.) that must buy into the program to ensure its success? Are they members of your advisory committee?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure that your collaboration/advisory committee is an active partnership?
- Who are agencies that will assist in the delivery of services for your program?
- How will you increase awareness of family literacy issues and your program's goals and needs among your partners and the community?
- What can be done to lay the groundwork for continued funding and expansion?

Program Outcomes/Evaluation

- What are the specific outcomes you expect for the family members who enroll in your program?
- How will you measure each outcome?
- Who will be responsible for data collection and reporting to funders?
- How will results be used with program participants, collaborators, others?

Program Planning

- How will team planning be encouraged? Does the budget accommodate time for weekly team planning for staff and home visits to families?
- How will you accommodate the interaction among all family literacy sites in your city, town and region?
- How will you determine the daily and weekly schedule of participants and staff?

How to Start a Family Literacy Program

Recruitment and Retention

- What are the recruitment strategies you plan to employ? What will be the ongoing plan for recruitment?
- How will practitioners be involved in recruitment?

Management and Staff Selection

- Has the program coordinator been determined or will that position be a newly hired one? (This needs to be determined as soon as possible.)
- What are the steps necessary in hiring staff for this program?
- How will you determine whether potential staff members are team players?
- How will the project coordinator be involved in hiring staff?

Site Selection

- What criteria will you use for selecting sites for the program? (eg accessibility, inclusivity etc.)
- What needs to be accomplished to prepare the physical environment for the program?
- As you think of the basic components of family literacy (adult education, early childhood education, parent support, parent-child interaction), what are the specific needs for preparing the site?
- What needs to be accomplished to ensure the acceptance and support of other staff members at the facility?

Staff Development

- How will you prepare your staff for their roles in the program?
- How will you respond to ongoing staff development needs?

Transportation/Day care/Meals

- What will be your participants' needs in areas of transportation, day care and meals? How will the program respond to these needs? Funding?
- Which partners can work with the sponsoring agency in these areas?

Equipment and Materials

- What existing equipment and materials will be used?
- What needs to be ordered? What organization or agency can provide these?
- What time frame should be established that ensures delivery of materials and equipment prior to program opening?

To find out more about how to start a family literacy program in your local community, contact Literacy BC at 1-888 732-3234.

Volunteering in a Family Literacy Program

Instruction

Parents who attend family literacy programs may have diverse goals, from helping their children learn to read, to working towards their High school Diploma, to improving their English skills and/or improving other basic skills. Sometimes, there are just not enough instructors to meet everybody's needs.

You can

- teach job interview skills (appropriate dress, practice interviews)
- teach computer skills to adults and children
- help participants improve literacy skills one-on-one
- teach parenting skills to young or new parents
- teach home skills like cooking or sewing
- read to children and play with them

Awareness

Raising awareness about family literacy and making the connection between your community and the families in need are important steps to ensuring success.

You can

- volunteer to be a guest speaker in your community on behalf of family literacy programs
- volunteer to speak to family literacy program participants about your career or a particular area of interest
- help coordinate and invite speakers to your local program

Program Support

Family literacy programs are often under-staffed and under-funded. There are many "non-financial" ways you can support your local program.

You can

- provide childcare for parents while they attend classes
- provide transportation to the family literacy program
- record books or donate audio-recorded books
- donate your company's goods or services as incentives for students
- donate new books to the program

Professional Development

Family literacy instructors can't be all things to all people at all times. Using the professional know-how of people in the community to augment instruction gives the students a more rounded experience.

You can

- become part of a resource pool
  let your local program know what special skills you have and that you'd be available for trainings or presentations
- present life skills workshops related to your profession
  for example, realtors (how to buy a house); bankers (how to set up a family budget)
- provide professional advice and support to instructors
  for example, psychology, medical, speech pathology, dental

To find out more about volunteering in a family literacy program in your local community, contact Literacy BC at 1-888 732-3234 or visit www.literacybc.ca/directory.

Innovative Practices in Family Literacy in BC

Hundreds of family literacy programs are making a difference in B.C.'s communities. The following list illustrates the variety of approaches offered.

Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (ALAPS). A program designed for Aboriginal parents who may need help in supporting their children's literacy development and an opportunity to discuss their parenting skills. The development of the Aboriginal component of the Literacy and Parenting Skills program was created by Aboriginal groups for use by Aboriginal parents in a rural or urban setting.

Parent Child Mother Goose. Parents gain confidence as learners and as parents, and make connections with community resource personnel and other families. Children improve language and pre-literacy skills and develop social skills while gaining in self esteem and having fun.

CHOOSE Success Family Literacy Program (Fort St. John Literacy Society). Parents receive tutorial support as they pursue their literacy goals; their children participate in a child care program. Adults work on a variety of courses and personal development goals including: bookkeeping, Grade 12 completion and ESL upgrading.

Canucks Family Education Centre (CFEC) offers 5 adult-focused, four-component family literacy models – Get Ready 2 Read (pre-school), Partners in Education (K-3), Youth in Transition (grades 6-9), YVR Art and Literacy and the ESOL Family Literacy program – that address school-based transitions in 5 locations in the Lower Mainland and Quesnel. CFEC also provides practicum opportunities for post secondary students from Langara College School of Nursing and University of British Columbia, Faculty of Dentistry.

Literacy and Families (Quesnel) was developed as a tool to promote literacy in preschool children, and to help parents/caregivers learn how to promote literacy in everyday activities. LAF combines activity with literacy. During each session a different story is read to the group, and then there is an opportunity for the parent/child to sit together and read the book. Craft, circle time, songs and activities are centered around the book's theme.

Families in Motion (Chilliwack) is an intergenerational literacy program for families with serious barriers to literacy and learning. Participants meet in three different settings each week: an elementary school, a First Nations reserve, and a community-based family resource program. This provides a variety of experiences and contacts to promote engagement in community and educational institutions. Parents are offered adult basic education programs and establish a personal learning plan, and parents and children learn together under the guidance of an adult facilitator and a preschool teacher.

Aboriginal Head Start is an early intervention preschool program designed for urban and northern (off-reserve) Aboriginal children. Its primary goals are to support the early childhood development of Aboriginal children and to instill pride in their Aboriginal heritage before they enter the mainstream school system. It focuses on 3 - 5 year olds with the intent of bringing them to the school readiness stage to help ensure an easy transition into kindergarten. Parental involvement is a major factor. Aboriginal Head Start believes that parents are their children's primary teachers endeavouring to involve them at all level. There is no cost to participants. The program includes transportation, as well as snacks, and/or appropriate meals, i.e. breakfast or lunch. Another important aspect is the development of mutually beneficial relationships with related community programs.

The Moe the Mouse™ Speech and Language Development Program was commissioned by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society and enhances language development in children aged 3 to 5 using Aboriginal toys and stories. The activities and materials help parents and educators provide opportunities for children to practice language skills in natural settings. The curriculum is currently used by a variety of organizations including Castlegar Neighbourhood House and Arrow Lakes Preschool.

Strong Start. A qualified early childhood educator leads families in activities including stories, music and crafts. Healthy snacks are available and provide a time for neighbourhood families to connect with each other.

To find out about specific family literacy programs being offered in your region, visit Literacy BC's online directory at www.literacybc.ca/directory.

How Literacy BC Supports Family Literacy

Literacy BC is the lead provincial organization responsible for family literacy development and coordination. We provide:

- awareness-raising and leadership
- training for family literacy practitioners
- program development consultation services
- information and referrals
- resources and material through our Resource Centre
- networking and electronic conferencing
- development and dissemination of proven practices and standards

We build partnerships with government, education boards, communities, and the many champions of family literacy in the private sector. We organize BC's Family Literacy Week in January every year.

We are a partner with the Centre for Family Literacy and 2010 Legacies Now in the innovative Family Literacy Certificate offered through Vancouver Community College. The first of its kind in British Columbia, this credential offers an excellent curriculum facilitated by leaders in the field. This certificate program is designed for those who currently work or wish to work in family literacy. It would also be of interest to those in related fields who want to learn more about family literacy.

Literacy BC believes family literacy is everybody's business

Parents: Often, parents are not aware of the powerful influence they have on their children's attitude toward literacy and learning, or are not aware of how they can help their children do better in school.

Communities: Strong families build successful communities.

Health: Literacy is a major factor underlying most other determinants of health (Perrin, 1998).

Education: Parents' educational level, particularly mothers', is strongly linked to children's health, school readiness and school achievement (Van Fossen & Sticht, 1991).

Community Services: Quality of life for families, including income levels and employment status, are directly related to the literacy levels of parents (IALS, 1995,1997)

Justice: Positive parent-child interactions act as a protective factor for high-risk children. Children's social relationships are the outcome most affected by parenting practices (HRDC Bulletin, 1997).

Annotated References

Clark, Christina. (2007). *Why is it Important to Involve Parents in Their Children's Literacy Development?* National Literacy Trust. Retrieved March 26, 2008, from www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/NLTresearch.html

This brief research summary findings support the involvement of parent's in their children's education has a great benefit. Research findings stress that parents reading to their children before they start school and general parental involvement in their child's literacy practices are more powerful forces affecting a child's interest in school and learning than other variables such as: social class, family size and level of parental education.

Dunaway, Jo, Rasmussen, Jean, and the Provincial Family Literacy Working Group. (1999). *The BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy.* Vancouver, Canada: Literacy BC. [649.58 R37]

The BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy was developed in June 1999 at the Family Literacy Summer Institute held by Literacy BC.

Gadsen, Vivian L. (2002). *Current Areas of Interest in Family Literacy* [Electronic version]. Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, 3, 7.

Gadsen's article reviews the history of family literacy and discusses current areas of interest in the field of family literacy including Parent-Child Literacy, Intergenerational Literacy, ESOL and Language Differences, Culture and Context, and Assessment and Evaluation. Gadsen argues that in the past family literacy research and practice has not focused on the "reciprocal nature of children's literacy and adult literacy". Gadsen stresses the importance of practitioners learning more about issues of culture, race and diversity to better serve the variety of families.

Hayden, Ruth, Norris, Stephen P., and Phillips, Linda M. (2006). *Family Literacy Matters: A Longitudinal Parent-Child Literacy Intervention Study*. Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Standard quantitative measures were used as well as extensive parent interviews to discover what parents want to learn to help themselves and their children. The main objective of this study was to determine whether positive effects are gained from participation in the 'Learning Together' program in terms of: children's literacy development, parents' literacy development, and parents' ability to help in their child's literacy development.

Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network (2007). *Family Literacy Connections*. Retrieved October 15th, 2008, from http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/flconn/cover.htm

This paper divides Family Literacy into six activity categories including: intergenerational, focus on parents and primary caregiver, parents involvements, family literacy activities for the general public, projects for family literacy resources, and family literacy professional development. The paper stresses the importance of parental involvement in their personal learning and that of their child/children.

Rodriguez-Brown, Flora V. (2003). "Family Literacy in English Language Learning Communities: Issues Related to Program Development, Implementation, and Practice". In Andrea DeBruin-Parecki & Barbara Krol-Sinclair (Eds.), *Family Literacy: From Theory to Practice* (pp. 126-145). Newark, Delaware: Int'l Reading Association.

'Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando (FLAME) – Learning, Improving, Educating' was started in 1989 and administered through the University of Illinois and based out of public schools. The program was created to support Hispanic parents (or family members) in realizing the importance of their role as their children's first teachers and to teach them ways to share literacy with their children at home.

Sticht, Tom G. (2007). *Improving Family Literacy By Increasing Investments in Adult Literacy Education*. Retrieved March 15th, 2008. www.nald.ca/library/research/sticht/08nov07/08nov07.pdf

Sticht notes that cuts to adult literacy programs are often made by governments who believe that it is only by funding young children's literacy programs that illiteracy can be stopped 'at the source'. He argues that this is a mistake that ignores the intergenerational transfer of literacy from adults to their children, and points to research that suggests that when parents have a higher level of education they transfer literacy 'intergenerationally' through oral language skills and modeling literacy skills to their children.

Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners. The National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, KY and The National Centre for ESL Literacy Education. Washington: DC. [2004].

The Toolkit was designed to give support to adult education and family literacy instructors who are new to adult English language learners and their families. The Toolkit stresses that it is important that adult education and family literacy program staff recognize and affirm the role of culture in learning.

Family Literacy Resources

Literacy BC's Provincial Literacy Resource Centre provides a large collection of free-to-borrow materials to support literacy instruction and research. Visit us online at www.literacybc.ca/PLRC/ResourceCentre.php

Overviews

A Communication Framework for Family Literacy: Bridging Differences, Planning, and Building Skill Sets. Jean Fowler and Sydney Hook. June 2005. [649.58 F69 2005]
Available online at http://bctf.ca/TeachingToDiversity/BC-projects/FamilyLiteracy.pdf
An introduction to definitions of family literacy and the role of interaction as fundamental to adult/child relationships.

Handbook of Family Literacy. Barbara Hanna Wasik (Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Welbaum, 2004. [649.58 S76 2006
This comprehensive, interdisciplinary review of family literacy is "intended for professionals (directors and staff) and graduate students in the areas of family literacy, early childhood education, parenting and adult education as well as researchers and policy makers in family literacy."

Learning from the Weaving Literacy Project: Report on the process and outcomes of the Weaving Literacy Project and *The Weaving Literacy Planning Guide: Supporting Integrated Approaches to Literacy and Community Building in Canada.* Smythe, Suzanne. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, 2005. [379.24 S69 and 379.24 S697]
Available online at: http://www.nald.ca/library/research/weave/cover.htm
The Weaving Literacy project brought together literacy organizations and family resource groups from 22 communities across Canada to develop and implement a literacy plan.

Promising Practices in Family Literacy Programs. Maureen Sanders and Janet Shively.
Available online at www.nald.ca/library/research/ppflp/cover.htm
Organized around five statements of principle that are the basis of promising practice in family literacy. Brief examples of programs implementing these principles are described. While not comprehensive it gives an overview of the variety of family literacy work done in Canada.

Programs and Program Development

Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (ALAPS): Facilitators Guide & Participants' Material. Laureen Mackenzie and Elaine Cairns. Calgary: Bow Valley College, 1998. [371.9797 M23]
This program is designed for people, with an aboriginal background, who may need help in assisting their children's literacy development and who may wish to talk about their parenting strategies. The material is appropriate for lower level or intermediate English Speakers.

LINC Parenting Program: Manual and Curriculum Guidelines. Developed by Toronto School District School Board, 2000. [646.58 L58 2000]
Available online at http://atwork.settlement.org/sys.atwork_library_details.asp?_id=1002644
The LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Parenting delivery model was designed specifically for newcomers with infants and young children. LINC parents learn English by participating in parent/child activities and guided group discussions about the development and behaviour of their children. It has made a significant impact on early language acquisition for both ESL parents and their children.

Making Choices: Parenting Program Inventory. Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, 2008.
Available at: http://parentsmatter.ca/
This Making Choices inventory givers parents and practitioners information about parenting programs. The inventory describes programs in detail and also invites comments and ratings from users.

Parents Reading, Children Succeeding. Betty Knight. 2005. Invermere, BC: Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.
Available online at www.nald.ca/library/learning/paread/cover.htm
The Parents Reading, Children Succeeding programme is designed for parents of children three to five years old. In the parent portion of the program, parents share ideas and activities that will help them support

the learning and emergent literacy skill development of their preschool children. In the children's portion, parents and children participate in a safe, fun program of activities that support and encourage learning.

Simple Steps. Yukon Literacy Coalition. Whitehorse: Yukon Literacy Coalition, 2005.
This workbook provides a step-by-step guide to planning and implementing family literacy projects in the community. It includes background information on family literacy, suggestions for different activities, and seven steps to plan you literacy project including writing effective proposals and monitoring results.

Instructional, Tutor and Learners Resources

Monitoring Tools: Adult Goal Progress Chart: Family Literacy Programs in the Fraser Valley. [Web document] Developed by Pam Auffray and Penny Petersen. Vancouver, BC, RiPal, [2006].
Available online at http://nald.ca/library/learning/groundup/mtagpc/cover.htm
This document describes two tools developed in British Columbia to monitor progress and measure outcomes in learner-centred family literacy programs. They are designed to help learners as well as practitioners monitor their progress towards learner chosen goals.

My Mummy Couldn't Read. Carey Rigby-Wilcox. Saskatoon, SK: C Unique Creations Inc., 2007.
Available online at http://www.seeabook.com/mummy.htm
This children's story, written from the perspective of a young boy, describes his mother's lifelong struggle with reading and how she overcomes it. It is suitable for family literacy programs.

Special Relationships: How Families Learn Together. Maureen Banbury. Leichester, UK: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2005. [649.58 B36 2005]
"What is the unique nature of intergenerational family learning, where family members are involved in joint learner sessions? This publication sets out to discover whether there is something unique about the learning that happens within the special relationships that are family intergenerational groupings."

The Road to Reading [DVD]. Produced and directed by Kem Murch. LO: London Investment in Education Council and Kem Murch Productions Inc., 1998. [DVD 64958 R63 1998]
Designed for parents, this DVD demonstrates everyday activities that parents can use at home to encourage literacy. Suggestions are offered by parents, childcare experts, teachers and librarians. "Many strategies are presented, and the emphasis is on variety, constancy and enjoyment."

You Make the Difference in Helping Your Child Learn. Ayala Manolson. Toronto, ON: Hanen Early Language Program, 2007. [649.58 M36 2007]
In clear, uncomplicated language, this book offer practical suggestions for parents and caregivers about interacting with children in a supportive way that encourages learning. A limited amount of text on each page is accompanied by colourful illustrations and cartoons.

Research

Family Literacy Matters: A Longitudinal Parent-Child Literacy Intervention Study. Lynda M. Phillips et al. Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises Ltd, 2006. [649.58 P45 2006]
By following families over three years, the authors of this Canadian study have convincingly shown the power of a family literacy program to change lives.

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Family Literacy Practices: Power In and Out of Print. Rogers, Rebecca. (2003). New Jersey, U.S.A: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
Of interest to researchers and practitioners in the fields of qualitative methodology, discourse analysis, critical discourse studies, literacy education, and adult literacy. The study focuses on June Treader and her daughter Vicky, urban African Americans labelled as 'low income' and 'low literate.' Using different forms of analysis, Rogers describes and explains the struggles June and Vicky face daily as they negotiate language and literacy in their home and community.

Family Literacy Resources

What Really Matters in Family Literacy? Saskatchewan Literacy Network (2008). Retrieved October 15th, 2008, from http://www.nald.ca/library/research/whatmatt/whatmatt.pdf

The College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan designed and implemented a research study with guidance from an inter-organizational Family Literacy research panel; the final report on phase one is due December 2008). The objectives of the research are to: a) clarify how family literacy is currently understood in Saskatchewan; b) to identify how family literacy programs are developed, delivered and evaluated in our province; c) to assess the impact of current family literacy programs, and d) to draw conclusions about possible directions for future family literacy programs.

Helpful Tools

The BC Literacy Directory. Find the programs in every BC community that are helping people of all ages improve their reading, writing and English language skills. A great resource for local literacy providers, who can add their information directly online. Visit www.literacybc.ca/directory.

Exemplary Literacy Materials Online is a free interactive online database of adult and family literacy resources and reviews, developed to meet the ongoing need of adult literacy providers and learners for appropriate and high quality instructional and learning resources. ELMO Reviews is a resource for: new and emerging adult readers and their families; literacy tutors; literacy practitioners; librarians; and others interested in adult and family literacy. It allows anyone to quickly access good, reviewed learning materials. It is also a place where literacy tutors and practitioners can share ideas about using resources.

The Learning Hotline (1-888-READ-234) is a sensitive, confidential referral service to provide British Columbians with details on how to access literacy programs and resources. On-call interpretation is available for all the main languages spoken in BC. Referrals are also available for those wanting to volunteer for literacy.

Statements and Standards of Best Practices

a) Philosophy

A quality family literacy program has a clearly written philosophy or mission statement, based on the values stated on page 4, which is communicated to the people involved with the program and is reviewed regularly.

Check the statements that apply to your program

___ Program has written philosophy/mission statement.

___ Program has written objectives/goals/statements. Statements address:

___ Target population

___ Ways of delivering program

___ Needs of families

___ Instructional approaches, and

___ Geographic area served

___ Instructional materials

___ Statements are communicated to personnel

___ Statements are reviewed regularly

Provide specific examples of your philosophy:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

b) Planning

A quality family literacy program regularly plans and sets goals and objectives consistent with its philosophy. It carries out these activities in a participatory manner.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ Planning sessions are conducted regularly

___ All associated with the program participate in setting program goals

___ All associated with the program are made aware of the goals for the current year

___ Progress toward goals is reviewed and results communicated to all associated with the program

___ A long range plan is developed for future growth and direction based on input from all associated with the program

Provide specific examples of planning:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

c) Community Involvement and Linkages

A quality family literacy program responds to the needs of its community. It establishes and maintains links with various referral sources and community agencies as well as other educational programs and organizations. It regularly reviews its community and organizational relationships.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ Community needs are assessed

___ The program defines the target population with whom it will work, based on community needs and program resources

___ Community members are represented on the Board if the program is independent of an institution

___ The program has developed and maintains links with various community social service agencies and referral sources as well as other educational programs in the community

___ The program takes a pro-active approach in education agencies about family literacy

___ The program is a member of, or linked to other literacy organizations (local, provincial, national, international)

___ Representatives of community groups are invited to participate in staff and/or training events as well as recognition events

___ The program reviews its community and organizational relationships

Provide specific examples of community linkages:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

d) Awareness Activities – Recruitment, Public Relations, Advocacy

A quality family literacy program initiates a community awareness program to attract potential learners and volunteers and to gain support for the program and literacy issues from other sectors of the community.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ The program has determined which recruitment strategies are most successful for attracting potential families

___ The program has determined which recruitment strategies are most successful for attracting potential volunteers

___ Recruitment strategies are implemented in accordance with program needs

___ The experience of previous families and volunteers is used in creating awareness activities

___ Contacts with relevant media and referral sources are made and maintained

___ Program information is publicized regularly by means such as posters, brochures, newsletters and reports to relevant organizations and individuals

___ The program undertakes an advocacy role in the community on literacy policy and support issues affecting families

Provide specific examples of awareness activities:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

e) Access

A quality family literacy program operates from an identifiable and accessible location. It provides flexible time and place arrangements for instruction and facilitates access to other learning opportunities.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ Program has advertised telephone number and hours to call

___ Instruction is offered at a suitable time

Facilities are accessible to families by:

___ public transportation

___ program sponsored transportation

___ private transportation

___ Facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities

___ Instruction if offered at a suitable time

___ Length of program is suitable

___ Opportunities exist to introduce families to other learning experiences

Provide specific examples of access:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

f) Facilities and Equipment

A quality family literacy program operates in facilities which are comfortable, adequately services and equipped to meet administrative, instructional and program support needs.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ Office space is adequate

___ Space for interviewing is available

___ Meeting room and/or teaching space if available

___ Space for resource materials display and storage is adequate

___ Physical space is safe and free from health hazards

___ Heating, ventilation and lighting are adequate

___ Furnishings are adequate

___ Washroom facilities are adequate

___ Social lounge space is available

___ Necessary instructional equipment (eg. chalkboards, projectors) provided

___ Necessary preschool equipment (large muscle etc.) is available

Provide specific examples of facilities and equipment:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

g) Administration

A quality family literacy program uses paid professional staff and is consistently well managed and run.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ Paid staffing level is adequate for the program to meet community needs consistent with the program's philosophy statement

___ Job descriptions of staff, including volunteer tutors and Board members are available

___ Qualifications for staff, including volunteer tutors, are specified and are appropriate for the education of adults and children

___ Specific commitments are required of volunteers and may be formalized in written agreements

___ Confidentiality of records is assured

___ Adequate bookkeeping; financial records kept

___ Child assessment, attendance and progress reports are kept

___ Records of support services are kept

Provide specific examples of administration system:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

h) Participation

A quality family literacy program encourages the participation of families and volunteers in as many different aspects of the program as possible consistent with its philosophy.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

Parents and volunteers (or former parents/volunteers):

___ participate in program planning and review processes

___ are represented on the program's Board of Directors or Advisory Committee

___ participate in other committee structures as they exist

___ participate in recruitment activities as resource people

___ help plan and participate in other program activities such as recognition events, publishing

___ previous and current parents are recruited as tutors or other program volunteers when applicable

Given your responses, check the following statements which best apply to your program.

___ Program meets at least six of the above conditions

___ Parents and volunteers are involved in at least four or five of the above activities

___ Parents or volunteers are involved in at least four or five of the above activities

___ Parents and/or volunteers are involved in any of the above activities

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

i) Staff Training and Development

A quality family literacy program uses well-trained professional staff who keep up-to-date with developments in the fields.

Check the statements which apply to your program

The staff (coordinator/adult and preschool teachers/ program assistant)

___ have relevant post secondary training in their field

___ have several years of practical experience in these fields

___ have developed skills and knowledge in family literacy programming

___ pay continuing attention to how adults and children learn

___ read relevant journals and new publications

___ regularly attend professional development events

___ give professional development workshops

___ work effectively with each other

___ work effectively with an advisory committee/ board

___ do public speaking engagements

Provide specific examples of staff development:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

j) Volunteer Support Services

A quality family literacy program provides a broad range of support services for its volunteers, including training.

Check the statements which apply to your program

Support services for volunteer tutors include:

___ initial interview with program staff
___ orientation to program
___ volunteer tutor training
___ in service training events
___ ongoing monitoring of progress, especially in early stages
___ recognition events
___ available supplies and instructional materials

Provide specific examples of volunteer support:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

k) Assessment

A quality family literacy program uses a variety of flexible, learner-centred assessment procedures.

Check the statements which apply to your program:

A program staff person

___ conducts an initial interview and orientation session with potential participation
___ identifies any special learning needs among potential participants
___ makes any necessary referrals to other programs and/or agencies
___ considers initial assessment results when reviewing learning needs

Participants are involved in

___ assessing their own needs
___ setting their own learning goals and objectives
___ designing assessment procedures

While participants are in the program

___ progress and achievement checks related to their goals and objectives are built into the program
___ new goals and objectives may be defined as former ones are attained
___ if progress is not being made, referrals may be made to other support services

When participants leave the program

___ assessment is based on the attainment of learner-stated goals
___ assessment is also based on participation progress and changes in areas such as self-esteem, body language, new uses of literacy, social achievements, parenting skills, job readiness and advocacy
___ assessment may also be based on testing procedures required by the program in specific content or skills areas

Provide specific examples of parent assessment:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

l) Family Support Services

A quality family literacy program provides a broad range of support services for its adults and children, including referral when appropriate.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

Support services for families include:

___ assistance with childcare
___ hot breakfast and/or lunch
___ information about counselling/referral services

___ information about financial services
___ information about educational opportunities
___ information about volunteer and/or employment opportunities
___ information about supplies and resource materials
___ regular follow up on absenteeism
___ follow up on registered participants who don't attend
___ provision of opportunities for participant networking
___ involvement of former participants to assist current participants
___ information on follow up activities at program end
___ information on child development issues and concerns

Provide specific examples of family support service:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

m) Instructional Strategies and Materials

A quality family literacy program uses a wide variety of instructional strategies and materials appropriate for families and consistent with the program's philosophy, as well as a wide variety of supplementary support and resource materials.

Check the statements which apply to your program

Instructional strategies should:

___ be built around the needs, interests and learning styles of participants
___ take into account the initial assessment results
___ build in progress checks
___ acknowledge achievements
___ encourage discussion and critical thinking
___ present reading/writing skills and strategies as part of an integrated communication process
___ encourage creative expression
___ recognize modifications required due to age or physical limitations
___ recognize multicultural requirements

Provide specific examples of instructional strategies:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

n) Program Evaluation

A quality family literacy program engages in ongoing evaluation to assure program effectiveness and involves families, volunteers, staff, board members, and other community partners in the process.

Check the statements which apply to your program:

___ program annually assesses the extent to which adults have achieved their goals
___ results are compiled to show the progress made by parents and children still in the program and those who have 'graduated'
___ reasons for dropping out are known
___ information is compiled on volunteers' contributions to the program, their performance and willingness to continue
___ other necessary information to assess program performance is compiled from appropriate sources
___ parents, volunteers and children's opinions on the program are sought by appropriate means (e.g. questionnaires, interviews)
___ annual review of all program operations (e.g. A to P) is undertaken in a participatory process
___ results are analyzed and priorities for the next year are decided on
___ plans are made to seek the resources or make the adjustments necessary to implement priorities
___ annual report produced and distributed to interested participants and community members

Provide specific examples of evaluation:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

o) Resources

A quality family literacy program has the necessary resources for staffing, facilities, materials and other support services the program needs to fulfill its mission.

Check the statements which apply to your program.

___ resources adequate for required staffing levels

___ resources adequate for required facilities

___ resources adequate for supplies, resource materials and any instructional equipment deemed necessary for the program according to its philosophy

___ resources adequate for awareness activities

___ resources available to cover support services for families and volunteers (e.g. childcare, transportation etc.)

___ funding assured on a regular basis

___ no fees charged for tuition

___ funds available for program expansion when required

___ a diversified financial support base has been developed if the program is independent of an institution

Provide specific examples of resources:

_____

_____

What steps could be taken to improve in this area?

_____

_____

p) Language Diversity

A quality family literacy program is sensitive to the different ways that individuals use spoken language, gestures and the written word.

A quality family literacy program is aware that the following may influence a person's understanding of communication:

• gender • family background • familiarity with print • • cultural background • regional background • • education levels • disabilities • past experiences • • school experiences •

Notes

Notes